

## CATHERINE'S HIDDEN LIFE

And from this, too, she drew her doctrine of holy hate. The more a soul so conjoined with God loves Him, so much the more does she hate the offence she commits against Him, and, seeing the origin of every sin has its roots in her own sensual part, she is inspired to a holy hate of this and wages a relentless war of the spirit against it. " Woe to that soul," said Catherine, " in whom this holy hatred is not; for needs must be that, where it is not, self-love will reign, which is the sink of all sins and the root and cause of every evil greed."<sup>1</sup>

This doctrine, upon which her whole spiritual teaching may be said to depend, Catherine explained in detail, some nine or ten years later, to an Englishman, whom we shall meet in her circle, William Flete, one of the Augustinian friars of Lecceto. " The holy mother,"\* he wrote, at the beginning of 1376, "speaking of herself in the third person, said that at the beginning of her illumination she set as the foundation of all her life, against self-love, the stone of self-knowledge, which she distinguished into three small stones. The first was the consideration of Creation ; that is, that she had no being of herself, but dependent only upon the Creator, both in production and in conservation, and that the Creator had done and was doing all this through His grace and mercy. The second was the consideration of Redemption, that is, how the Redeemer with His blood had restored the life of grace which had until then been destroyed ; and this through His pure and fervent love, which man had done nought to deserve. The third was the consideration of her own sins, committed after baptism and the grace received in it, for which she had deserved eternal damnation, and was stupefied at the eternal goodness of God because He had not commanded the earth to swallow her up. From these three considerations, there was born in her so great a hatred of herself, that she desired nought according to her own will, but only according to the will of God, who, she knew, willed nought save her good. From this it followed that she was content and glad at every tribulation and temptation ; not only because it came to her by the will of

<sup>1</sup> *Legenda*, I. x. I, 8, 9 (§§ 92, 100,